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(54) Title: METHOD AND SYSTEM TO ENABLE A FIXED PRICE PURCHASE WITHIN AN ONLINE AUCTION ENVIRONMENT

(57) Abstract: A method of allowing a seller in an auction facility to offer buyers the option of buying an offering at a pre-auction seller determined price or using a regular auction process. If a buyer is given the option to purchase at the seller determined price and decides to use the regular auction process by submitting a bid, the option to buy the offering at a pre-auction seller determined price is discontinued.

METHOD AND SYSTEM TO ENABLE A FIXED PRICE PURCHASE WITHIN AN ONLINE AUCTION ENVIRONMENT

This application claims priority from the provisional application 60/242,729 entitled METHOD AND SYSTEM TO PROVIDE AN AUCTION TRANSACTION PROCESS AND A FIXED-PRICE TRANSACTION PROCESS VIA A NETWORK-BASED COMMERCE FACILITY and filed on October 23, 2000, which is incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to the field of e-commerce and, more specifically, to a pre-auction seller determined price for an Internet-based auction facility.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Many Internet-based auction facilities have developed in the past several years. Through Internet-based auction facilities, potential sellers can enter information about their product or service for potential buyers to bid on. The information submitted by potential sellers is then organized and stored by the Internet-based auction facility. Potential buyers can search through the organized seller information to find products or services they wish to bid on.

Once a buyer locates an item to bid on, the buyer can compete with other buyers for the item by submitting bids during a specified auction time period. At the end of the specified auction time period, the highest bid buyer is notified and the transaction between the seller and the highest bid buyer is facilitated.

While the current Internet-based auction facility works well for some items, there are several disadvantages. For example, many items in an Internet-based auction facility have at most one bid during the specified auction time. An interested buyer must sometimes wait days for an auction to end even though his bid is the only bid received. Also, there are many potential buyers who don't like auction formats.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

According to one aspect of the present invention there is provided an auction method to present an auction purchase process and a fixed price purchase process for purchasing a seller's offering by a buyer. Upon receipt of a bid from a buyer, the fixed price purchase process for the item bid on is terminated and only the auction purchase process is available for the duration of the auction.

Other features of the present invention will be apparent from the accompanying drawings and from the detailed description that follows.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention is illustrated by way of example and not limitation in the figures of the accompanying drawings, in which like references indicate similar elements and in which:

Figure 1 is a block diagram illustrating an exemplary network-based transaction facility in the form of an Internet-based auction facility

Figure 2 is a database diagram illustrating an exemplary database for the transaction facility.

Figure 3 is a flow chart illustrating an exemplary method of receiving offering information from a seller including whether to offer the item at a pre-auction seller determined price.

Figure 4 is a flow chart illustrating an exemplary method of generating a buyer preferred index page using category preferences or search criteria.

Figure 5 is a flow chart illustrating an exemplary method of displaying user interfaces for and conducting an auction facility with an auction purchase process and optionally a fixed-price purchase process.

Figure 6 illustrates an exemplary seller interface to receive information on seller's offerings.

Figure 7 illustrates an exemplary buyer interface to facilitate a buyer in locating items to purchase or bid on.

Figure 8 illustrates an exemplary item list generated in response to buyer's category selection or search criteria provided in the user interface of Figure 7.

Figure 9 illustrates an exemplary buyer interface used to receive buyer information including an indication to use the fixed-price purchase process or the auction purchase process.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

A method and system for providing an option to sell and buy at a pre-auction seller determined price in an Internet-based auction facility are described. In the following description, for purposes of explanation, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the present invention. It will be evident, however, to one skilled in the art that the present invention may be practiced without these specific details.

Terminology

For the purposes of the present specification, the term "transaction" shall be taken to include any communications between two or more entities and shall be construed to include, but not be limited to, commercial transactions including sale and purchase transactions, auctions and the like.

Transaction Facility

To better understand the invention, an embodiment of an electronic transaction facility is shown in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1 is a block diagram illustrating an exemplary network-based transaction facility in the form of an Internet-based auction facility 10. While an exemplary embodiment of the present invention is described within the context of an auction facility, it will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the invention will find application in many different types of computer-based, and network-based, commerce facilities. It will also be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the invention may be used in auction facilities of other architectures. The instructions stored in the auction facility (which can be executed by a processor) can be stored on a machine-readable medium including, but not limited to read only memory (ROM), random access memory (RAM), magnetic disk storage media, optical storage media, flash memory devices, or electrical, optical, acoustical or other form of propagated signals.

The auction facility 10 includes one or more of a number of types of front-end servers, namely page servers 12 that deliver web pages (e.g., markup language documents), picture servers 14 that dynamically deliver images to be displayed within Web pages, listing servers 16, CGI servers 18 that provide an intelligent interface to the back-end of auction facility 10, and search servers 20 that handle search requests to the auction facility 10. E-mail servers 21 provide, *inter alia*, automated e-mail communications to users of the auction facility 10.

The back-end servers include a database engine server 22, a search index server 24 and a credit card database server 26, each of which maintains and facilitates access to a respective database.

The Internet-based auction facility 10 may be accessed by a client program 30, such as a browser (e.g., the Internet Explorer distributed by Microsoft Corp. of Redmond Washington) that executes on a client machine 32 and accesses the auction facility 10 via a network such as, for example, the Internet 34. Other examples of networks that a client may utilize to access the auction facility 10 include a wide area network (WAN), a local area network (LAN), a wireless network (e.g. a cellular network), or the Plain Old Telephone Service (POTS) (or PSTN) network.

Database Structure

Figure 2 is a database diagram illustrating an exemplary database 23, maintained by and accessed via the database engine server 22, which at least partially implements and supports the auction facility 10. The database 23 may, in one embodiment, be implemented as a relational database, and includes a number of tables having entries, or records, that are linked by indices and keys. In an alternative embodiment, the database 23 may be implemented as a collection of blocks in a block-oriented database. While Figure 2 shows one embodiment of a database, it will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the invention can be used with other database structures.

Central to the database 23 is a user table 40, which contains a record for each user of the auction facility 10. A user may operate as a seller, buyer, or both, within auction facility 10. The database 23 also includes item tables 42 that may be linked to the user table 40. Specifically, the item tables 42 include a seller items table 44 and a buyer items table 46. A user record in the user table 40 may be linked to multiple items that are being, or have been auctioned via the auction facility 10. A link indicates whether the user is a seller or a buyer with respect to items for which records exist within the items tables 42. While offerings by the seller are referred to as "items" in the specification, "items" includes any product or service offered by the seller. The database 23 also includes a note table 48 populated with note records that may be linked to one or more item records within the item tables 42 and/or to one or more user records within the user table 40. Each note record within the note table 48 may include, *inter alia*, a comment, description, history or other information pertaining to an item being auctioned via the auction facility 10 or to a user of the auction facility 10.

A number of other tables are also shown to be linked to the user table 40, namely a user past aliases table 50, a feedback table 52, a bids table 54, an accounts table 56, and an account balances table 58.

Figure 3 shows a flowchart for an exemplary embodiment of a method to acquire offering information from a seller. The seller issues a listing request (block 100) to the auction facility 10, and the auction facility generates instructions (block

110) offering the seller the option to sell his item using an auction purchase process option and/or a fixed-price purchase process option. After the instructions have been transmitted (block 120), and a page server 12 (see **Figure 1**) displays the instructions, the seller decides whether to offer a buyer the chance to buy the offering at a pre-auction seller determined price in a fixed-price purchase process. The seller transmits a purchase process indicator by either an affirmative (block 140) or a negative (block 150). The server can receive and store in note table 48 of database 23 (**Figure 2**) this information for later use (block 160). The seller also transmits other offering information, such as a description, picture, reserve price, and contact information to be collected and stored in note table 48 of database 23 (see **Figure 2**) (block 160). Optionally, if the seller sends a pre-auction seller determined price that is less than the reserve price he or she sends, the seller can be notified of an error.

Figure 4 shows a flow chart showing one embodiment of a buyer's interaction with the Internet-based auction facility. The buyer locates the site by inputting the auction facility identifier (block 600) into the client program 30 running on client machine 32 (see **Figure 2**) which transmits the auction facility identifier (block 610) through the Internet 34 (See **Figure 1**). The Internet-based auction facility receives the transmission and (block 620) a listing server 16 (see **Figure 1**) generates a broad list of available categories of items stored in items table 42 (see **Figure 2**) for the buyer to select from. The auction facility 10 (block 630) transmits the category list and transmits an interface, which can be presented by a page server 12 (see **Figure 1**), to allow the buyer to enter search criteria which may be independent of the category list. The buyer selects a category preference from the category list or generates a search criteria (block 640). The buyer then transmits (block 650) the category preference or search criteria, again, through the Internet 34 (see **Figure 1**). Upon receipt of the category preference or search criteria, the auction facility uses a search server 20 (see **Figure 1**) to generate an item index page of relevant offerings including visual indicators displayed in respect to items in which the seller is allowing a buyer to buy the item at a pre-auction seller determined price (block 660). The item index page is transmitted to the buyer (block 680). After receiving the item index page (block 670), the buyer generates a request for an item to purchase or bid on. Picture

servers 14 (see Figure 1) can also be used to show the buyer pictures (if available) of the item. The buyer's request is then transmitted (block 20).

Figure 5 shows a flow chart illustrating how the client interfaces with the auction facility, located on a first computer system, when a pre-auction seller determined price is an alternative option to bidding. After the facility receives the buyer's request (block 200), decision block 210 decides if there is still time remaining in the item's auction (item requested by the buyer). If a predetermine period of time has passed, the buyer will not be allowed to place a bid or buy at the pre-auction seller determined price. Instead the auction will end and the highest bidder (if there is one) will be determined (block 380). If there is time remaining, then the determination is made in decision block 220 whether a prior bid has been received. If a prior bid has been received, then the pre-auction seller determined price is no longer available to the buyer and the buyer's only option is to bid. If no prior bid has been received, and the item has a pre-auction seller determined price available, a first user interface will be created (block 230). The auction facility 10 will make the typical auction purchase process available through the user interface (block 240) and will make the fixed price purchase process available to the client (block 250). The pre-auction seller determined price is retrieved for the user interface (block 260). The first user interface is converted into a markup language document suitable for viewing by the buyer (block 270). The generated markup language document is then transmitted for viewing by the buyer on a second computer system using page servers 12 on the first computer system (block 280) (see Figure 1). If, at decision block 220, it is determined that an initial bid value has been received, a second user interface will be generated (block 390). The typical auction purchase process is then made available through the user interface (block 400). The second user interface is converted into a markup language document suitable for viewing by the buyer (block 270). The generated markup language document is then transmitted to the buyer (block 280).

After the markup language document has been transmitted to the buyer, a determination is made at decision block 420, based on the transmitted markup language document whether the fixed price purchase process is available to the

buyer. If the fixed price purchase process is available to the buyer, the buyer then makes a determination at decision block 290 whether to buy the item at the pre-auction seller determined price or whether to bid on the item. If the buyer chooses to purchase the item using the fixed price purchase process, his indication to buy at the pre-auction seller determined price is transmitted to the auction facility.

If the fixed price purchase process is not available to the buyer (as determined in decision block 420) or fixed price purchase process is available, but the buyer chooses not to use the fixed price purchase process, the buyer generates a bid (block 310). The bid is then transmitted to the auction facility (block 320).

Upon receiving a transmission from the buyer, a determination is made at decision block 330 whether the buyer has chosen the fixed price purchase process. If the buyer has chosen the fixed price purchase process, the auction is stopped (block 340) and a transaction is initiated between the buyer and the seller (block 410). Optionally, the auction facility can check the buyer's credit before stopping the auction.

If the buyer has not opted to use the fixed price purchase process, as determined by the auction facility at decision block 330 (either because it wasn't available or he or she preferred to place a bid instead), the bid is received (block 350). Optionally, if the bid is greater than the pre-auction seller determined price (and the fixed price purchase process is still available), the auction facility may invite the buyer to use the fixed price purchase process. Upon receipt of the bid, the fixed price purchase process option is removed (block 360) and a determination is made at decision block 370 to see if there is any time remaining in the auction. If there is time remaining in the auction, bids can be received and processed in the above manner until there is no more time remaining in the auction. However, if there is no more time remaining in the auction, the highest valid bid is determined from the received bids (block 380), and a transaction is initiated between the highest bidder and the seller (block 410).

Figure 6 provides an exemplary embodiment of the user interface 500 created at block 110 in Figure 3 to relay offering options to the seller and collect information

on the seller's item. The user interface 500 gives the seller the option to allow a buyer to buy the item at a pre-auction seller determined price 514.

Figure 7 provides an exemplary embodiment of the category list 517 and search criteria request generated by object 620 in Figure 4. A buyer can generate search criteria (block 640) by typing the search criteria (block 516).

Figure 8 provides an exemplary embodiment of the item index page generated at block 660 in Figure 4. A possible placement of the fixed-price purchase process availability icon 518 is shown next to the item. Also displayed in the embodiment of the item index page is a list of prices 514 which could either be the current bid or the pre-auction seller determined price if available.

Figure 9 shows an exemplary embodiment of the markup language document generated at block 270 in Figure 5. Regular auction panel 503 is generated (blocks 240 and 400). Fixed price purchase process panel 504 is generated (block 250) in Figure 5. The buyer can submit a bid 520 or, depending on the availability of the fixed price purchase process, can start the fixed price purchase process in panel 504. Thus a method and system for providing an option to sell and buy at a pre-auction seller determined price in an Internet-based auction facility have been described. Although the present invention has been described with reference to specific exemplary embodiments, it will be evident that various modifications and changes may be made to these embodiments without departing from the broader spirit and scope of the invention. Accordingly, the specification and drawings are to be regarded in an illustrative rather than a restrictive sense.

CLAIMS

What is claimed:

1. A method of facilitating an electronic transaction, the method comprising:

presenting, via a first computer system, both an auction purchase process and a fixed-price purchase process for purchase of an offering to a buyer; and

responsive to receipt of a bid from the buyer as part of the auction purchase process, removing presentation of the fixed-price purchase process.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the presenting includes generating a first user interface identifying both the auction purchase process and the fixed-price purchase process to the buyer.
3. The method of claim 2 wherein the first user interface is a markup language document generated at a second computer system, and wherein the presenting includes communicating the markup language document from the second computer system to the first computer system via a network.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein the removing of the presentation includes generating a second user interface that identifies only the auction purchase process to the buyer.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein the auction purchase process is presented with an initial bid value and wherein the fixed-price purchase option is presented with a pre-auction seller determined price.
6. The method of claim 1 including, responsive to receipt of a fixed price offer from the buyer as part of the fixed-price purchase process, establishing the electronic

transaction between the buyer and a seller for purchase of the offering at a fixed price.

7. The method of claim 1 including, responsive to the receipt of the bid from the buyer, as part of the auction process, maintaining only the auction purchase process for a predetermined period of time to receive further bids from further buyers.

8. The method of claim 7 including, at conclusion of the predetermined time period, establishing the electronic transaction between a winning buyer, who submitted a highest valid bid, and the seller.

9. The method of claim 1 including presenting to a seller a purchase process option to sell the offering by both the auction and the fixed-price purchase processes, and receiving a purchase process indication from the seller responsive to the presentation of the purchase process option.

10. A method comprising:

receiving an offering's selling information from a seller including an offering description, an indication whether to allow a buyer a chance to buy the offering at a pre-auction seller determined price, and if the indication to allow the buyer the chance to buy the offering at the pre-auction seller determined price is affirmative, the pre-auction seller determined price;

receiving purchase information from the buyer including either: (1) an affirmative indication to purchase the offering at the pre-auction seller determined price if a seller has given affirmative indication to allow the buyer the chance to buy the offering at the pre-auction seller determined price; or (2) a desired bid the buyer will buy the offering at;

determining a successful buyer comprising:

if an affirmative indication to purchase the offering at the pre-auction seller determined price is received from the buyer and no bids have been accepted for the offering, the buyer, having given affirmative indication, is the successful buyer;

if multiple buyers submit bidding information and the highest bid does not equal any of the other highest possible bids, the buyer with the highest bid is the successful buyer; and

determining a successful bid price to be paid by the successful buyer comprising:

if the affirmative indication to purchase the offering at the pre-auction seller determined price is received from the buyer on an offering who's seller has given an affirmative indication to allow the buyer the chance to purchase the offering at a pre-auction seller determined price, the successful bid price is the pre-auction seller determined price; and

if multiple buyers bid, the bid equals the highest bid.

11. The method of claim 10 further comprising requesting additional bidding information from the buyer giving the affirmative indication to purchase the offering at the offering's pre-auction seller determined price if the additional bidding information has not been received before; the additional bidding information used to determine whether to accept the buyer's affirmative indication to purchase the offering at the offering's pre-auction seller determined price.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein if the seller gives the affirmative indication to allow the buyer the chance to buy the offering at the pre-auction seller determined price, the chance to buy the offering at the pre-auction seller determined price terminates upon receipt of a first bid from the first buyer.

13. The method of claim 10, wherein if the offering's selling information received from the seller includes a reserve price, the seller is notified of an error if the reserve price is not equal to or less than the pre-auction seller determined price if the seller gives the affirmative indication to allow the buyer the chance to buy the offering at the pre-auction seller determined price.
14. The method of claim 10, wherein if the seller gives the affirmative indication to allow the buyer the chance to buy the offering at the pre-auction seller determined price, a first buyer's desired bid is compared to the pre-auction seller determined price and if the first buyer's desired bid is greater than the pre-auction seller determined price, a message is sent to the first buyer inviting the first buyer to give the affirmative indication to purchase the offering at the pre-auction seller determined price before the first buyer's desired bid is accepted.
15. The method of claim 10, wherein if the seller gives the affirmative indication to allow the buyer the chance to buy the offering at the pre-auction seller determined price, a first buyer's desired bid is compared to the pre-auction seller determined price and if the first buyer's desired bid is less than the pre-auction seller determined price, a message is sent to the first buyer inviting the first buyer to give affirmative indication to purchase the offering at the pre-auction seller determined price before the first buyer's desired bid is accepted.
16. The method of claim 10 further comprising presenting a part of the offering's selling information to a buyer on a computer screen.
17. The method of claim 16 further comprising displaying a visual indicator in association with the offering's selling information if the seller of the offering has given the affirmative indication to allow the buyer the chance to buy the offering at the pre-auction seller determined price.

18. The method of claim 17 further comprising removing the visual indicator after a first bid is accepted on that offering from a first buyer.
19. The method of claim 17 further comprising generating a user interface to receive the buyer's affirmative indication to purchase the offering which the seller has given the affirmative indication to allow the buyer to purchase at the pre-auction seller determined price at the pre-auction seller determined price.
20. A method comprising:
- receiving offering information from a plurality of sellers at a computer-based transaction facility;
 - organizing the offering information into predetermined categories;
 - receiving a category selection from a buyer at the computer-based transaction facility;
 - automatically displaying a list of offering information in the selected category, with a visual indicator appearing in association with a respective offering if a seller of the offering has given affirmative indication to allow a buyer a chance to buy the first offering at a pre-auction seller determined price.
21. The method of claim 20 further comprising removing the visual indicator after a first bid is accepted on the first offering from a first buyer.
22. The method of claim 20 further comprising removing the offering's selling information if a seller has given an affirmative indication to allow the first buyer a chance to purchase the first offering at a pre-auction seller determined price and an affirmative indication to purchase the offering at the pre-auction seller determined price has been accepted.

23. A machine-readable medium having stored thereon instructions, which when executed by a processor cause the processor to perform:

receiving an offering's selling information from a seller including a offering description, an indication whether to allow a buyer a chance to buy the offering at a pre-auction seller determined price, and, if the indication to allow the buyer the chance to buy the offering at the pre-auction seller determined price is affirmative, the pre-auction seller determined price;

receiving purchase information from the buyer including either an affirmative indication to purchase the offering at the pre-auction seller determined price if a seller has given affirmative indication to allow the buyer the chance to buy the offering at the pre-auction seller determined price or a desired bid and a highest possible bid the buyer will buy the offering at;

determining a successful buyer comprising:

if the affirmative indication to purchase the offering at the pre-auction seller determined price is received from the buyer and no bids have been accepted for the offering, the buyer, haven given affirmative indication, is the successful buyer; and

if multiple buyers submit bidding information and the highest possible bid does not equal any of the other highest possible bids, the buyer with the highest possible bid is the successful buyer;

determining a successful bid price to be paid by the successful buyer comprising:

if the affirmative indication to purchase the offering at the pre-auction seller determined price is received from the buyer on a offering who's seller has

given the affirmative indication to allow the buyer the chance to purchase the offering at a pre-auction seller determined price, the successful bid price is the pre-auction seller determined price; and

if multiple buyers bid, the bid equals the highest bid.

24. The machine-readable medium of claim 23 wherein the machine-readable medium is selected from a group comprising read only memory (ROM), random access memory (RAM), magnetic disk storage media, optical storage media, flash memory devices, or electrical, optical, acoustical or other form of propagated signals.

25. The machine-readable medium of claim 23, wherein if the seller gives the affirmative indication to allow the buyer the chance to buy the offering at the pre-auction seller determined price, the chance to buy the offering at the pre-auction seller determined price terminates upon receipt and acceptance of a first bid from buyer.

26. The machine-readable medium of claim 23, further comprising presenting a part of an offering's selling information to a buyer on a computer screen.

27. The machine-readable medium of claim 23, further comprising displaying a visual indicator near an offering's selling information if the seller of the offering has given the affirmative indication to allow the buyer the chance to buy the offering at the pre-auction seller determined price.

28. The machine-readable medium of claim 27 further comprising removing the visual indicator after a first bid is accepted on that offering from a first buyer.

29. The machine-readable medium of claim 27 further comprising a graphical interface to receive the buyer's affirmative indication to purchase the offering that the

seller has given the affirmative indication to allow the buyer to purchase at the pre-auction seller determined price at the pre-auction seller determined price.

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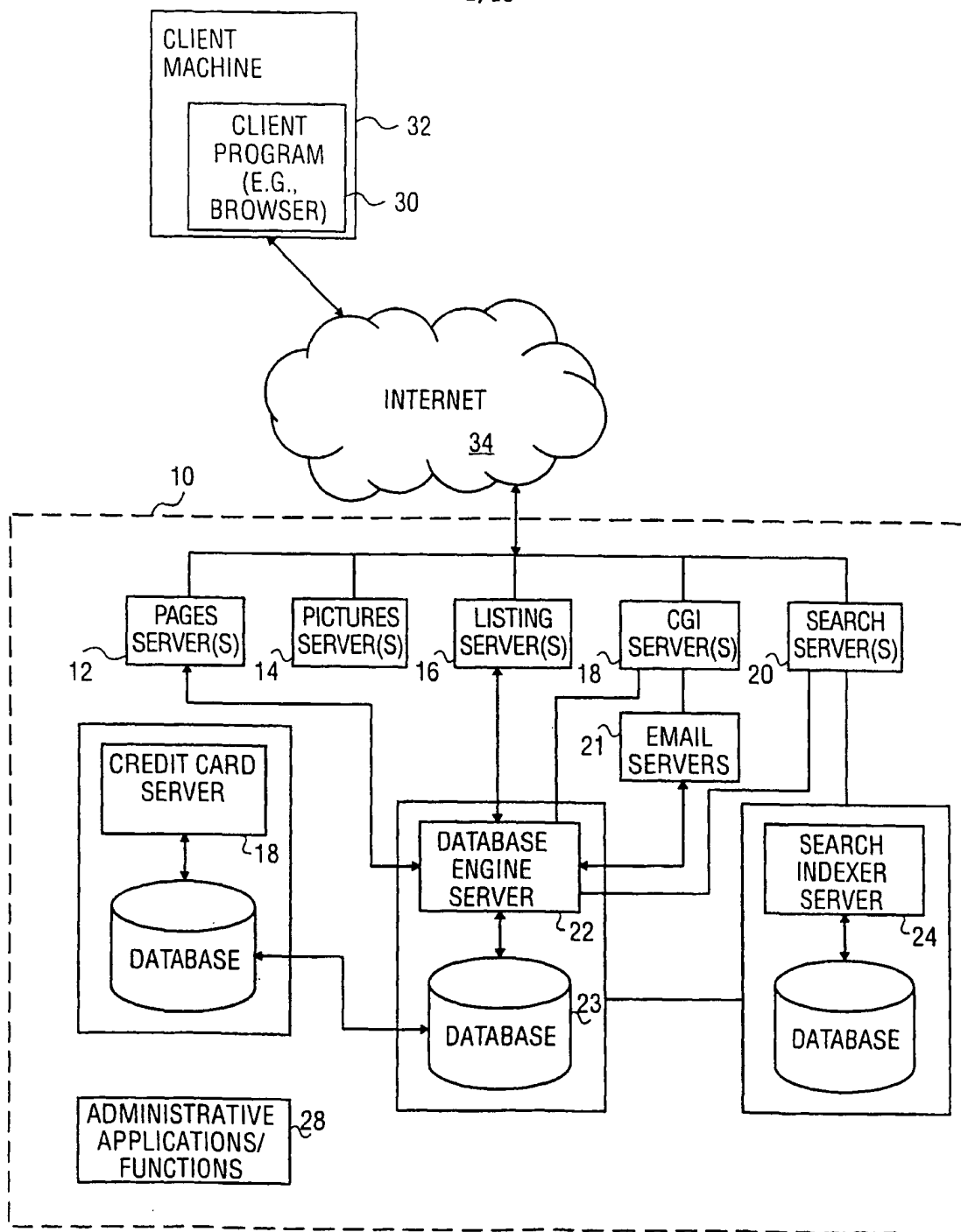


FIG. 1

23

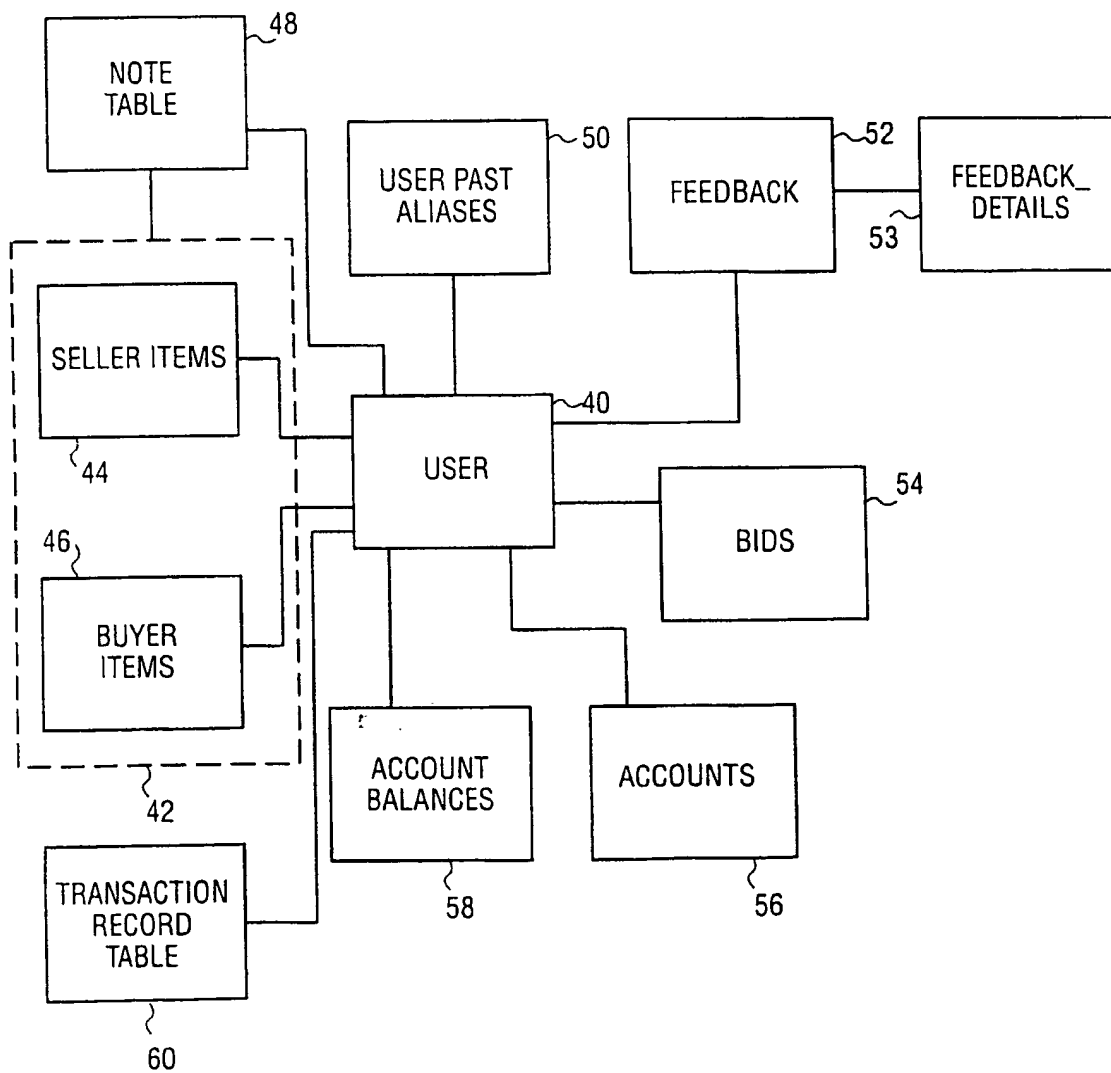


FIG. 2

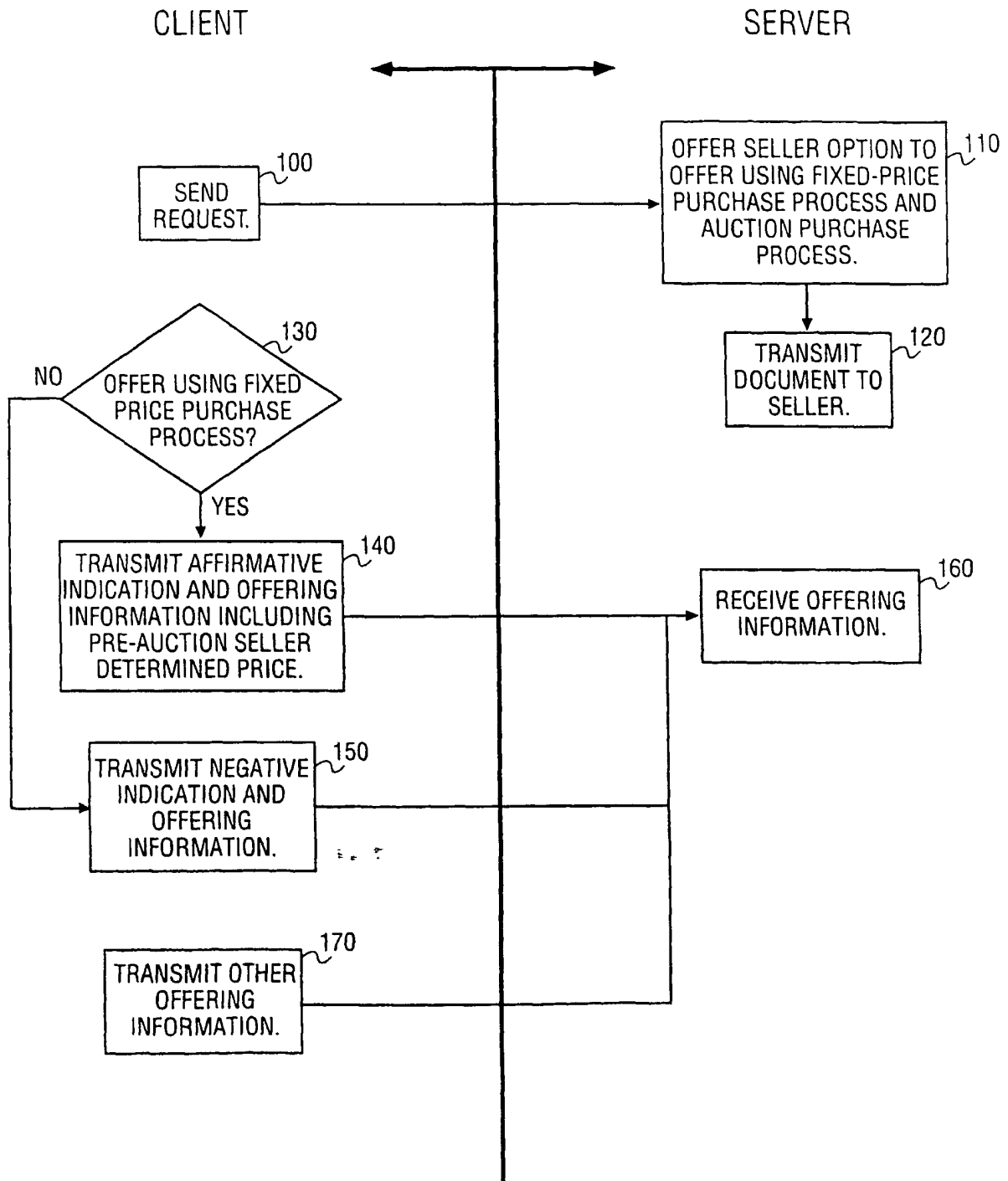


FIG. 3

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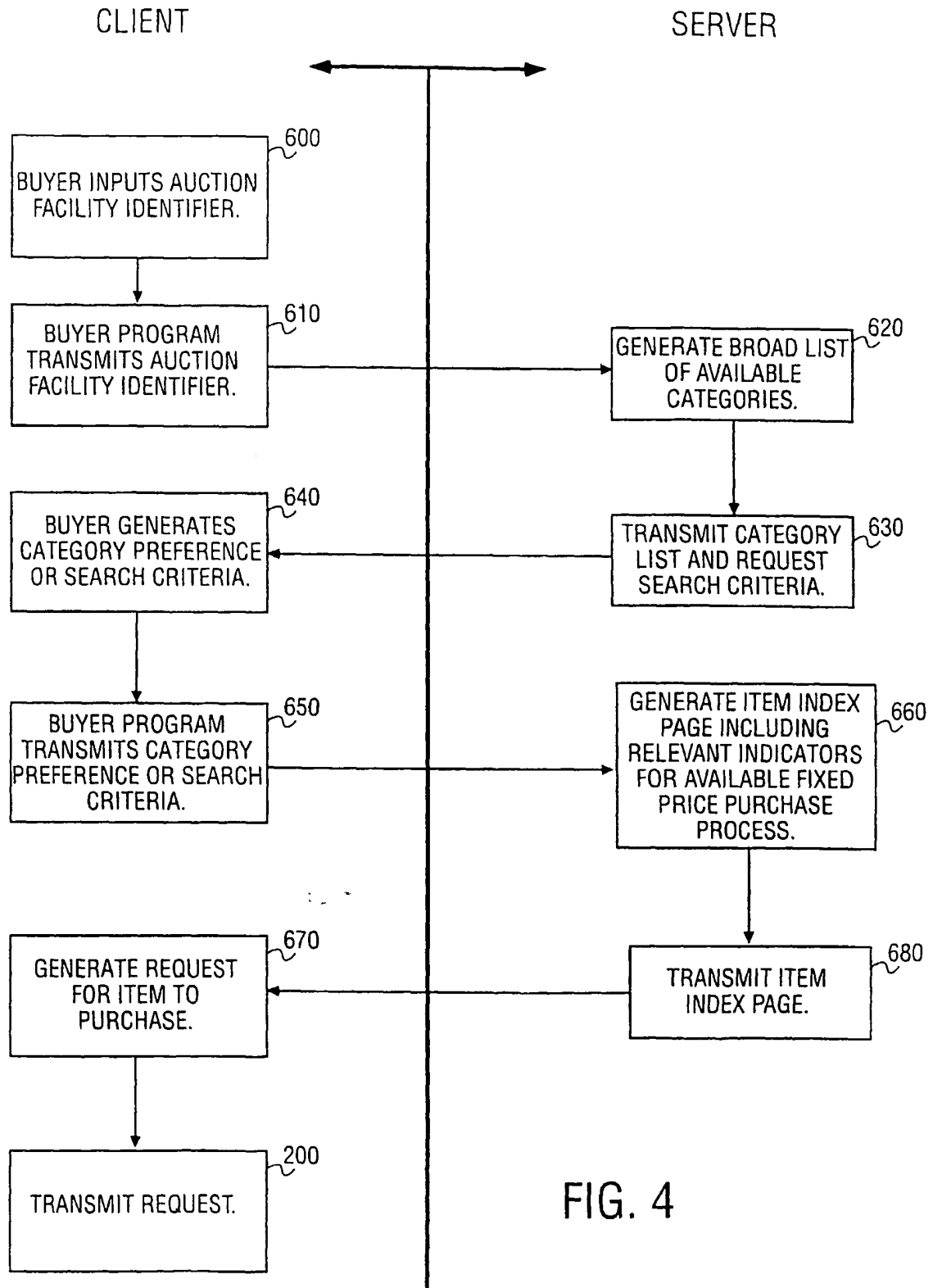


FIG. 4

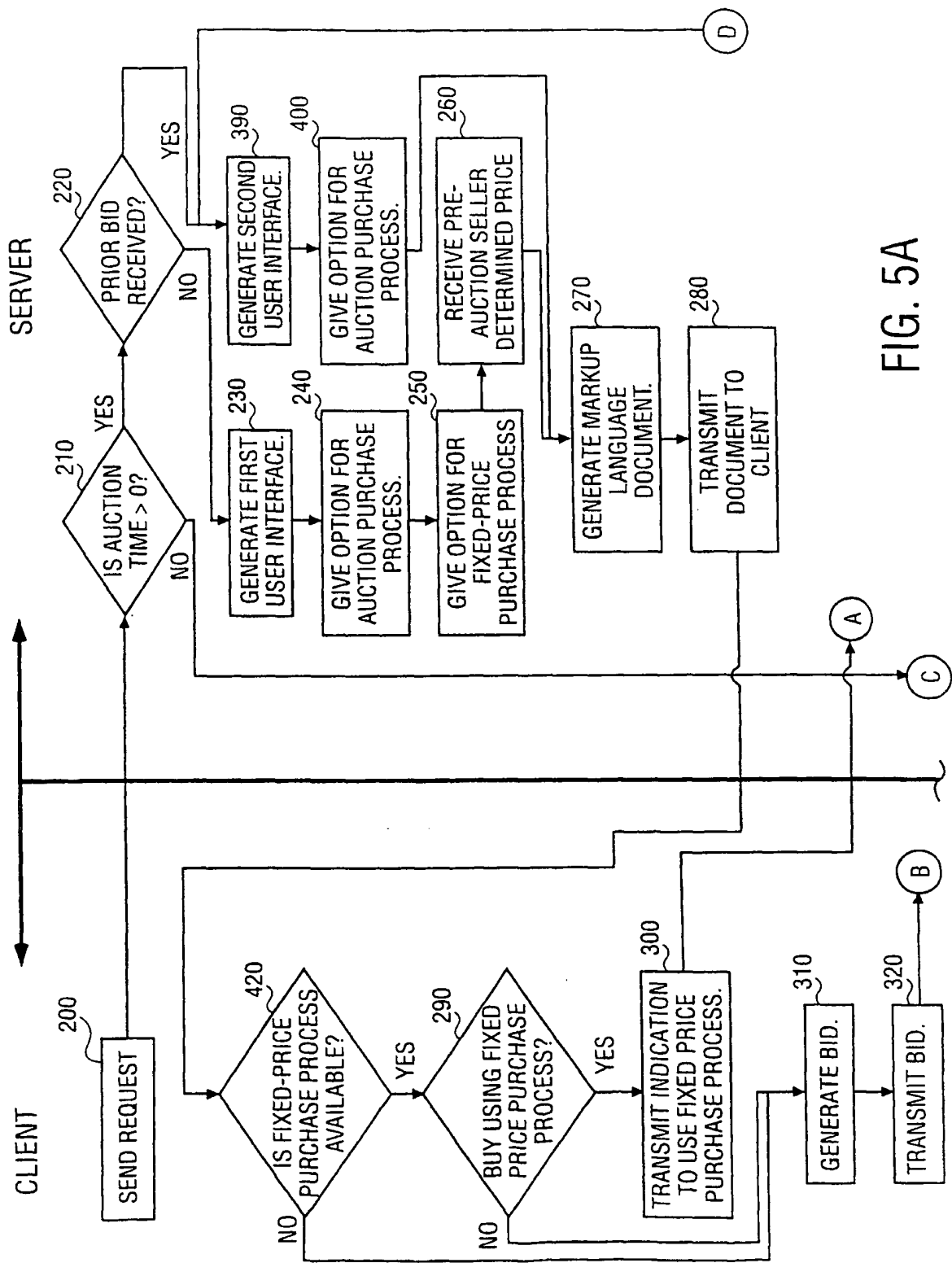


FIG. 5A

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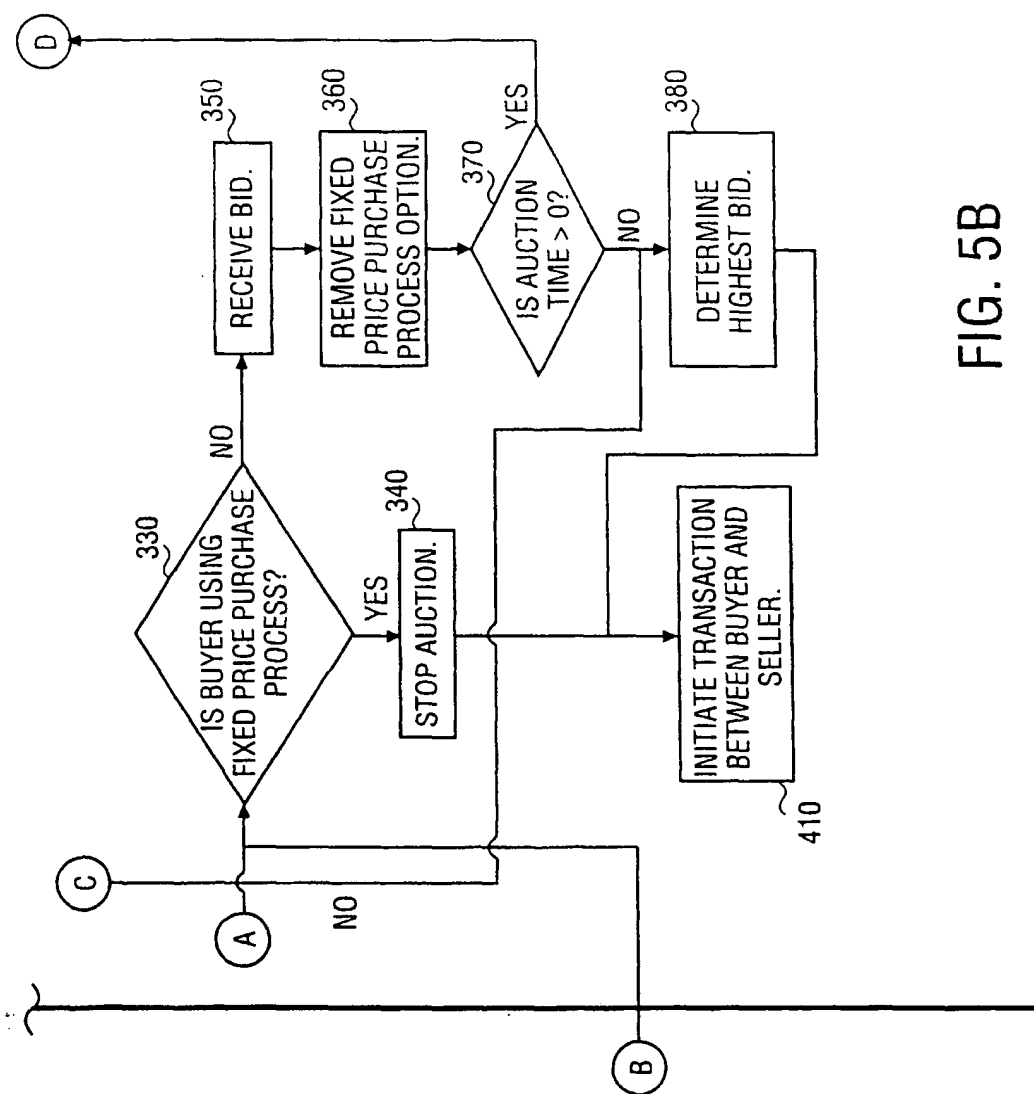


FIG. 5B

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500

Sell Your Item

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• [Free Shipping Estimates from iShip.com](#)

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You can also use your email address.

Your Password:

**Title
required**

(45 characters max; no HTML tags, asterisks, or quotes, as they interfere with Search) [see tips](#)

Category (Choose one category only; be as specific as possible.)

required

Antiques & Art:

**Description
required**

513

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514

FIG. 6

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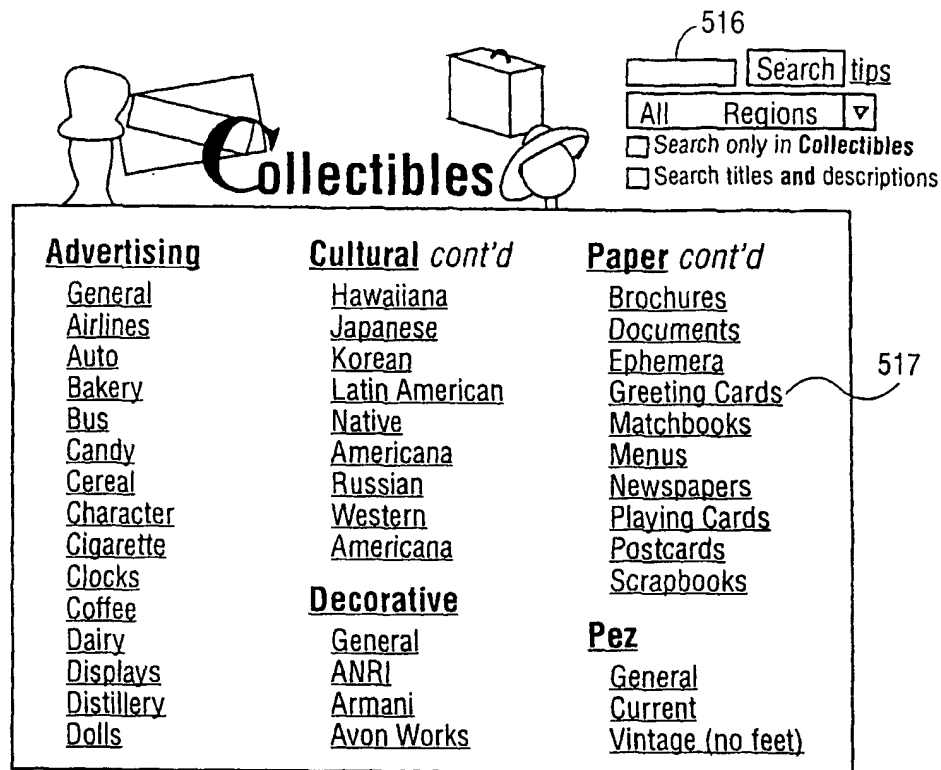


FIG. 7

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tips
☒ Search only in Collectibles
☐ Search titles and descriptions

Updated: Oct 13, 2000
 06:31:09
 PDT











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Buy-It-Now				
Status	Current Items - Current	Price	Bids	Ends PDT
	2GOLD Alpine Bells, medium and small	\$3.99	-	10/23 06:15
	Pickard China 1980 CHRISTMAS BELL	\$15.00	-	10/20 06:07
	Crown and Rose 1979 Xmas bell PEWTER	\$12.00	-	10/20 06:06
	Crown & Rose 1978 PEWTER Christmas bell, #1	\$9.95	-	10/20 06:05
	Kaiser (Germany) 1981 Annual Christmas Bell	\$12.00	-	10/20 06:05
	Kaiser 1980 Christmas Bell in White Bisque	\$12.00	-	10/20 06:05
	Kaiser (Germany) 1979 Annual Christmas Bell	\$8.00	-	10/20 06:04
	KAISER Cobalt Blue 1978 Xmas bell, Germany	\$8.00	-	10/20 06:04
	Three Bell(s) Some Collectible; Low Price	\$5.00	-	10/20 06:03
	Large Crystal Bell with Four Women	\$9.99	-	10/20 04:47

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FIG. 8

10/10

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Description

I HAVE A BENNINGTON POTTERY SHACK TRAY IT IS MARKED ON BACK. IT IS IN MINT

[Free Honesty Counters Image Hosting, Listing Tools and Message Boards](#)

Bidding

<p align="center">BENNINGTON POTTERY TRAY Item #430507896</p> <p>Opening bid: \$8.99</p> <p>Your maximum bid: <input type="text"/></p> <p align="center"><small>(Minimum bid: \$8.99)</small></p> <p align="center"><input type="button" value="Review bid"/></p> <p>520</p> <p>eBay will bid on your behalf up to your maximum bid, which is kept secret from other this is called <u>proxy bidding</u>.</p> <p>Your bid or purchase is a contract - Buy or place a bid only if you're serious about the item. If you are the winning bidder, you will enter into a legally binding contract to purchase the item from the seller.</p> <p>Buy It Now no longer available - This item was listed with a Buy It Now price which is no longer available since bidding has started. Learn more</p>	<p align="center">How to Bid</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Register to bid - If you haven't already. It's free! 2. Learn about this seller - read feedback comments left by others. 3. Know the details - read the item description and payment & shipping terms closely. 4. If you have questions - contact the seller <u>in winning</u> before you bid. 5. Place your bid! <p align="center">eBay purchases are insured.</p>
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Buy It Now Price: \$52.00

Your User ID:

You can also use your email address.

Your Password:

[Forgot your password?](#)

Save time by [signing in](#). (You may also [sign in securely](#)).

On the next page, you'll be asked for credit card or alternative verification if your card is not already on file with us.
Your credit card will **not** be charged.

Your purchase is a contract - Buy only if you're serious about the item. You will enter into a legally binding contract to purchase the item from the seller.

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FIG. 9

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/US01/31012

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(7) : G06F 17/60

US CL : 705/37

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 705/37

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)
DIALOG

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	Autodaq Creates Online Marketplace For Used Auto Industry, Business Wire, January 17, 2000, entire document.	1-29
X	US 6,044,363 A (MORI et al) 28 March 2000 (28.03.2000), entire document.	1-29

☐ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.

☐ See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:

"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance

"E" earlier application or patent published on or after the international filing date

"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)

"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means

"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed

"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention

"X" document of particular relevance, the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone

"Y" document of particular relevance, the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art

"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

05 December 2001 (05.12.2001)

Date of mailing of the international search report

15 JAN 2002

Name and mailing address of the ISA/US

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